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**Charakteristika vztahů na počátku dvacátého století ve Velké Británii
podle románu Johna Galsworthyho Sága rodu Forsytů
The Portrayal of Relationships in Early 20th Century Britain in John
Galsworthy's The Forsyte Saga**

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Anotace

Anotace: Bakalářská práce je zaměřena na britskou společnost na konci devatenáctého a začátku dvacátého století. Na základě románu Johna Galsworthyho – *Sága rodu Forsytů* autorka popisuje změny ve vztazích a genderové postavení jednotlivých generací.

Klíčová slova: Británie, Anglie, Forsyte, Galsworthy, gender, historie, muž, sága, žena

Annotation: The author of the BA final paper focuses on British society at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Based on John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* the changes in the relationships and the gender situation in particular generations are described.

Key words: Britain, England, Forsyte, Galsworthy, gender, history, man, saga, woman

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Introduction

My research focuses on society in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century in Great Britain. Based on John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, which is a chronicle that is centred on the lives of three generations of the upper middle class' family, and other sources mentioned in the following chapter, the changes in the relationships and the gender situation in particular generations of the Forsyte family are analysed.

British society could be depicted based on *The Forsyte Saga* because this novel points out the process of the liberation of relationships from the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century in Great Britain. In the novel as such we can see how society conceives of itself (Culler 2002, 221).

The characteristics of the upper middle class, which are noticeable in *The Forsyte Saga*, are described with a regard to the male and female roles. The effects of the process of the liberation on British society in the twentieth century are examined. In accordance with the relationships between the characters of *The Forsyte Saga* there it is shown that the roles of men and women changed in many aspects. There are depicted the conflicts among the members of both the same and different generations caused by their attitude to the conventions of the time.

The novel-cycle shows that the upper middle class' values and life changes significantly from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. The changes are mostly found in the following areas: marriages and divorces, relationships between men and women, the roles and rights of men and women in a family and expected behaviour of men and women.

There are described marriages, which were thought to be the “transactions” realized by men in the end of the nineteenth century (Rubin 2004, 780). As for the fact that women used to be a property of men at the time (McDowall 1994, 162), the thesis deals with the attitudes of the characters of *The Forsyte Saga* to such conventions. The examples of cross-cousin marriages are mentioned as well (Rubin 2004, 782) (Galsworthy 1946a, 217).

With regard to the fact that the divorce rate was increasing in the twentieth century (McDowall 1994, 163), there are also depicted the divorces among the members of the Forsyte family. The circumstances of such occasion are described based on *The Forsyte Saga* and other sources as well.

The relationships between men and women changed in the following way. It is known that by the end of the nineteenth century women knew nearly nothing about the sexual side of life before they married (Galsworthy 1946c, 159). After the marriage they were supposed to be faithful to their husbands (Culpin and Turner 1987, 220). However, in the twentieth century it was already possible for women to get married being pregnant (Galsworthy 1946b, 230). It is also known that men ought to “give and take” women earlier (Rubin 2004, 779).

As for the rights and role of men and women in a family, being thought to be a property of men (780), women had been unequal to men in nearly every way by the end of the nineteenth century (Culpin and Turner, 1987, 217). Men were even allowed to beat their wives (McDowall 1994, 162). However, in the twentieth century women seemed to have equal rights to men (Galsworthy 1946c, 18-19). Women achieved a right to vote (McDowall 1994, 162). Their appearance was changed as well (McDowall 1994, 163). Nevertheless, in *The Forsyte Saga* it is shown that even in the early twentieth century it was up to a man to decide whether

or not operate his wife in the case of a health complication during a birth-giving (Galsworthy 1946b, 234).

The expected behaviour of men and women in the nineteenth century and the twentieth century differ from each other. In the early nineteenth century women were supposed to have been waiting at home for their husband to return from work (Culpin and Turner 1987, 217). However, in the twentieth century it was common for women to enjoy themselves in public (224). There also were fewer differences between the behaviour of men and women in the twentieth century (Rubin 2004, 787). Dominant women characters (Galsworthy 1946c, 62) as well as submissive men characters (75) had not any longer been considered unacceptable (Armstrong 2004, 575) (Rubin 2004, 786).

The BA final paper is divided into chapters. The first of them is the literature review. The sources of the thesis are characterized there. There it is explained how particular resources are related to the thesis as well.

In the following chapter the members of three generations of The Forsyte family are introduced. The relationships between the characters of *The Forsyte Saga* are analyzed. There are described features of each of the generations with regard to the gender situation.

The third chapter compares the upper middle class at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century on the basis of a critical analysis of *The Forsyte Saga*. The society during the Victorian Age and the twentieth century is described based on the relationships between the characters in *The Forsyte Saga*. Above mentioned issues (marriages and divorces, relationships between men and women, the roles and rights of men and women in a family and expected behaviour of men and women) are described.

There is depicted the liberation in the twentieth century and its effects on male and female roles. There is also examined how the characters are related to traditional male and female roles, especially to the models represented in Nancy Armstrong's "Some Call it Fiction" (Armstrong 2004, 575) and Gayle Rubin's "The Traffic in Women" (Rubin 2004, 782-786).

In conclusion, the findings are summarized. In consideration of *The Forsyte Saga* and other literature which had been applied there are represented main issues connected with the relationships within British society from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century.

Literature Review

The main source concerned is John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, which consists of three novels (*The Man of Property*, *In Chancery*, *To Let*) linked by two interludes ("Indian Summer of a Forsyte", "Awakening") about three generations of the upper middle class family – the Forsytes.

In *The Forsyte Saga* the process of the liberation of relationships, especially the changes of the roles of men and women in British society, since the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century is recorded, as I am going to show in this thesis.

The upper middle class is characterised based on *The Forsyte Saga*. In the cycle we can also see in which aspects male and female roles changed from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. With regard to the relationships between the characters of *The Forsyte Saga* there are examined many issues (explained in the introduction) connected with society during Victorian Age and the twentieth century.

As for the liberation in the twentieth century, it can be observed to which extent the male and female roles changed. Whether or not the characters of the cycle fulfil the expected models of the ideal man and woman both in the nineteenth and the twentieth century is depicted as well.

Nancy Armstrong's "Some Call it Fiction: On the Politics of Domesticity" is an essay which focuses on the relation between Victorian novels about the domestic realm and the historical context of the nineteenth century England with a regard to the gender situation.

Armstrong claimed that we must read fiction not as literature but as the history of gender differences (Armstrong 2004, 581). Since *The Forsyte Saga* is read this way in this thesis, we can observe many issues connected with the gender situation of particular generations.

There is also depicted that for the middle class the family was thought to be the basis of society (572). In *The Forsyte Saga* it is shown that in spite of the feuds between some members of the family, the Forsytes often meet together on many occasions.

In “Some Call it Fiction” it is explained which characteristics used to be suitable for a husband and a wife. A husband should: get goods; travel, seek a living; get money and provisions; deal with many men; be “entertaining”; be skillful in talk; be a giver; apparel himself as he may; dispatch all thing outdoors (575). A wife ought to: gather goods together and save them; keep the house; do not vainly spend money; talk with few people; be solitary and withdrawn; boast of silence; be a saver; apparel herself as it becomes her; oversee and give order within (575). Thus, for example, James Forsyte, who was talkative (Galsworthy 1946a, 53), was thought to be a good husband. By contrast, Jon Forsyte was silent (Galsworthy 1946c, 74), which would be considered unnatural for men.

Mikhail Bakhtin’s “Discourse in the Novel” was applied because it focuses on the context (historical, social, etc.) of language. According to Bakhtin, all words exist in dialog with other words.

The essay among other things deals with social stratification, which should be taken in account concerning *The Forsyte Saga*. There are no words and forms that belong to “no one”(Bakhtin 2004, 676). All words have the “taste” of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age

group, the day and hour. Shortly, each word tastes of the context (676). In the thesis are described the situations in which the context of age and the geographical context influenced the attitudes of the characters in *The Forsyte Saga* (Galsworthy 1946c, 150, 179).

Individual voice can be changed in accordance with various conditions (Bakhtin 2004, 674). For example, old Jolyon Forsyte thought that Irene Forsyte was a “dangerous” woman (Galsworthy 1946a, 161). However, since he got to know her better he admired her (Galsworthy 1946b, 10). His attitude to women obviously started to diverge from the way of thinking of the generation he belonged to.

It is known that the upper middle class and each generation of it had its specifics in language and the way of thinking (Bakhtin 2004, 675). Popular expressions and names at the end of the nineteenth century and the twentieth century were different from each other as to the fact that each generation at each social level has its own language (676). In *The Forsyte Saga* it is shown especially on the uses of catch-words such as “scandal” (Galsworthy 1946a, 102), “chic” (Galsworthy 1946b, 51) and “romantic” (Galsworthy 1946c, 30). It is also known that in the nineteenth century Winifred Dartie called her son, whose name was Publius Valerius Dartie, Publius and in the twentieth century Val according to what had been popular at the time (Galsworthy 1946b, 51).

The ideas about narrative strategies from Seymour Chatman’s “The Structure of Narrative Transmission”, which is concerned with the development of modern narratology, were used as well.

According to Chatman, the attitudes of characters are demonstrated both by external and internal voices (Chatman 2004, 106). In *The Forsyte Saga* there are the

examples of the usage of both external and internal voices so that we can see the difference between told as well as done and thought.

In *The Forsyte Saga* it is depicted that old Jolyon Forsyte followed the customs of the upper middle class but he thought them a common lot (Galsworthy 1946a, 19). When his son young Jolyon, who was a painter, fell in love with a foreign governess and left his first wife, old Jolyon expelled him from the family (22). However, later on he made peace with him (23).

The quotes concerned with characters in Jonathan Culler's *Structuralist Poetics* were useful for the parts of the thesis which deal with the significance of the characters of *The Forsyte Saga*.

Jonathan Culler claims that character serves as the major totalizing force in fiction for many readers (Culler 2002, 269). What is more, according to *Structuralist Poetics* others see us as a character from a novel (222). Thus, focusing on characters in *The Forsyte Saga* - a novel which is concerned with society at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century – is up to point.

In *Structuralist Poetics* it is written that characters are distinguished from each other by physical and psychological characteristics (269). The following chapters of this thesis deal mainly with the psychological part, especially the attitude of the characters of *The Forsyte Saga* to the role of men and women. Culler also focuses on the historical background, because with regard to the historical distinction, we can read many earlier novels in a different way (270).

As for putting in context facts about British society in the nineteenth and the twentieth century, consequences of which appear in *The Forsyte Saga*, *Making Modern Britain: British Social and Economic History from the Eighteenth century to the Present Day* by Christopher Culpin and Brian Turner as well as David

McDowall's *An Illustrated History of Britain* was applied. There was also used *This is Christianity: Christianity Today* by Michael Keene.

McDowall's *An Illustrated History of Britain* focuses on the history of Great Britain from the earliest times to the eighties of the twentieth century. Several facts about the Victorian Age and the beginning of the twentieth century, which are included in the book were applied in the thesis in accordance with the story of *The Forsyte Saga*.

There is described the growth of the middle class as well as the development of women's rights from the end of the nineteenth century to the twenties of the twentieth century. In *An Illustrated History of Britain* it is written that women in Britain were treated worse than in other industrialising European countries in the nineteenth century (McDowall 1994, 162). Men were even allowed to beat their wives with a stick at the time (162). However, in the twentieth century there came several changes in the role of men and women. For example, women over the age of thirty achieved a right to vote in 1918 (162). In *An Illustrated History of Britain* it is written that in the twentieth century, the divorce rate was increasing (163).

According to McDowall the liberation of women in the twentieth century was expressed also by their appearance. They wore shorter hair as well as shorter skirts (163). In *The Forsyte Saga* is shown that Soames Forsyte found it offending (Galsworthy 1946c, 36). Some women were drinking and smoking in public as well (McDowall 1994, 163).

Making Modern Britain: British Social and Economic History from the Eighteenth century to the Present Day by Christopher Culpin and Brian Turner focuses on the social and economic aspects of British history from the eighteenth

century to the eighties of the twentieth century. For this thesis the chapter of the book called “The Changing Role of Women 1800 – 1980s” was used.

In *Making Modern Britain* it is shown that women have been considered to be unequal to men in nearly every way (Culpin and Turner 1987, 217) and sex was not mentioned in public by the end of the nineteenth century (220). Nevertheless, there were more prostitutes in the cities than in the twentieth century (220), because many girls became prostitutes in order to make enough money to live on (219). In *The Forsyte Saga* it is written that Irene tried to help such women (Galsworthy 1946b, 7).

Culpin and Turner also described the middle class ideal woman in the early nineteenth century: a married woman, waiting at home for her husband to return from work (Culpin and Turner, 217). However, in *The Forsyte Saga* it is written that Ann and Hester, the ladies of the first generation of the Forsyte family who experienced the Victorian Age, stayed unmarried (Galsworthy 1946a, 241). The possible reason is that they might have not wanted to get married because in the nineteenth century all possessions belonged to the husband of a married woman (Culpin and Turner, 218). Nevertheless, Culpin and Turner also provided us with the information that in the years of 1870 and 1882 were issued The Married Women’s Property Acts, which allowed women to keep their own incomes and property when they married (221). As for the changing appearance of the women in the twentieth century, in *Making Modern Britain* it is written that short hair and short skirts suited independent girls who wanted to enjoy themselves (223-224).

This is Christianity: Christianity Today by Michael Keene was used as well. The book deals with the attitudes of the Christians to many issues. The chapter called “What do Christians think about divorce” was useful for the thesis. There it is written that until 1857 women were not allowed to get divorced from their husbands in Great

Britain (Keene 1995, 16). After that they could, but they had to prove that their husband had committed adultery plus desertion or cruelty whilst a man only had to prove adultery (16). This is related to the divorces between Soames and Irene Forsyte and Winifred and Montague Dartie (Galsworthy 1946b, 55).

“The Traffic in Women” by feminist anthropologist Gayle Rubin consists of the characteristics of male and female roles. Many ideas from the essay are included in the thesis to explain the gender situation in *The Forsyte Saga*.

In “The Traffic in Women” it is written that the historical and moral element determines the role of men and women (Rubin 2004, 773). Women rather than men do housework and capitalism is heir to a long tradition (773). It refers to the Forsyte family as a symbol of capitalism in which men and women were given specific roles.

Gayle Rubin also mentioned frequent cross-cousin marriages (Rubin 2004, 782), an example of which we can also find in *The Forsyte Saga*. Being cousins, Val and Holly married each other (Galsworthy 1946a, 217). Jon and Fleur, who were cousins as well, wanted to get married to each other (Galsworthy 1946c, 135), but eventually they did not.

According to “The Traffic in Women”, women were transacted as slaves, serfs, and prostitutes, but also simply as women (Rubin 2004, 780). In *The Forsyte Saga* we can see that marriages also were thought to be a kind of transaction usually realized by men. However, Soames Forsyte asked the mother of Annette Lamotte for the hand of her daughter (Galsworthy 1946b, 220). Annette’s mother was probably a widow. If she was not widowed Soames would have certainly asked her father.

Gayle Rubin also focuses on “gift exchange”. One can solicit a friendly relationship in the offer of a gift; the acceptance of a gift implies a confirmation of relationship (Rubin 2004, 778). However, one might feel humiliated when another is

giving them more than can be reciprocated (778). It is shown in *The Forsyte Saga*, that Soames had been giving gifts to Irene in order to get love from her (Galsworthy 1946a, 3). Irene tried to love Soames (156), but she was not able to and left him (219).

Based on psychoanalytic research, in “The Traffic in Women” are introduced expected roles of men and women. Components of feminine personality are masochism, self-hatred and passivity (Rubin 2004, 786). Thus masochism is bad for men, essential to women (786). Adequate narcissism is necessary for men, impossible for women (786). Passivity is tragic in man, while lack of passivity is tragic in woman (786). In *The Forsyte Saga* we can see that considering the behaviour of Irene bad (Galsworthy 1946b, 92), James and Emily both agreed with the idea that a lack of passivity in woman is tragic. Fleur Forsyte was not passive as well (Galsworthy 1946c, 62). There is also the example of a modest man in *The Forsyte Saga* – Jon Forsyte (57). Gayle Rubin refers to obligatory sex roles (Rubin 2004, 787). Thus, there were fewer differences between the behaviour of men and women in the twentieth century.

As a primary source of this thesis *The Forsyte Saga* was used. The process of the liberation of relationships from the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century was described based on the novel-cycle. Nancy Armstrong’s “Some Call it Fiction: On the Politics of Domesticity” and Mikhail Bakhtin’s “Discourse in the Novel” were applied because these essays focus on the context (historical, social, etc.). The ideas about narrative strategies, concretely those connected with the usage of external and internal voices, from Seymour Chatman’s “The Structure of Narrative Transmission” were used to depict the attitudes of the characters of *The Forsyte Saga*. Jonathan Culler’s *Structuralist Poetics* was applied because it is

among other things concerned with characters. As for putting in context historical facts relating to *The Forsyte Saga*, *Making Modern Britain: British Social and Economic History from the Eighteenth century to the Present Day* by Christopher Culpin and Brian Turner, David McDowall's *An Illustrated History of Britain* and *This is Christianity: Christianity Today* by Michael Keene were used. Gayle Rubin's "The Traffic in Women" was applied because it is concerned with the issues connected with gender.

Characters of The Forsyte Saga

Although character serves as the major totalizing force in fiction for many readers, structuralism has paid least attention to character (Culler 2002, 269). However, it is important to focus on characters because it is a major aspect of the novel (269).

According to Jonathan Culler's *Structuralist Poetics* others see us as a character from a novel (222). Hence it is to the point to focus on characters in a novel which is concerned with society at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century – such as *The Forsyte Saga*.

Characters are distinguished from each other by physical and psychological characteristics (269). This thesis deals mainly with the psychological aspects of particular characters, especially their attitude to the role of men and women in society.

The attitudes of characters are demonstrated both by external and internal voices (Chatman 2004, 106). In *The Forsyte Saga* there is a variety of examples of the usage of both external and internal voices to depict the difference between told as well as done and thought. For instance, we can see that old Jolyon Forsyte followed the customs of the upper middle class but he thought them a common lot (Galsworthy 1946a, 19). When his son young Jolyon, who was a painter, fell in love with a foreign governess and left his first wife, old Jolyon expelled him from the family: "His son ought, under the circumstances, to have gone to the dogs." (22). Indeed, old Jolyon still must have liked his son and later on he made peace with him (23).

There should be also taken into account the historical background, because once equipped with the historical distinction, we can read many earlier novels in a different way (Culler 2002, 270). The historical and moral element determines the role of men and women (Rubin 2004, 773). Thus, we can see Forsytes as a symbol of capitalism in which men and women were given specific roles.

In the case of this thesis fiction ought to be read not as literature but as the history of gender differences (Armstrong 2004, 581). What is more social stratification should also be taken into account (Bakhtin 2004, 675), concretely characteristics of the middle class, because there are no words and forms that belong to “no one” (676). All words have the “taste” of a profession, a particular person, a generation, etc. (676).

The first generation of the Forsyte family, which John Galsworthy described consisted of ten siblings: Ann, Jolyon, James, Swithin, Roger, Juley, Hester, Nicholas, Timothy and Susan (Galsworthy 1946a, 241).¹ The son of Jolyon Forsyte was given the same name as his father. To distinguish them they were called old Jolyon and young Jolyon according to their age.

Old Jolyon Forsyte was a rich tea merchant. As a proper man at the end of the nineteenth century, he endeavoured to get money and provisions (Armstrong 2004, 575) (Galsworthy 1946a, 17). Although old Jolyon was very successful, his colleague Nicholas Treffry said about him that if he was not so careful of himself, he would be able to manage everything (18). When Nicholas died old Jolyon thought that it happened because he had risked too much (18). At any rate heedfulness is

¹ There is included a family tree in Galsworthy, John. *The Forsyte Saga*. London: Heinemann, 1946. in the novels *The Man of Property*, *In Chancery* and *To Let*. In *The Man of Property* the family tree is on page 241. Therefore, further references to this family tree are omitted.

considered to be a “forsyte-like” feature – Forsytes “never attempt to do anything too adventurous or too foolhardy” (160).

Young Jolyon had been married three times. He had a daughter called June with his first wife Frances Crisson. June was later engaged to an architect Philip Bosinney, to whom George Forsyte gave the nickname “Buccaneer” (33). However, Philip fell in love with Irene (the first wife of Soames Forsyte), who used to be June’s best friend (6) and June stayed unmarried. Later on, Bosinney had been run over in the fog and killed (231).

Old Jolyon admired his granddaughter June (25). When Philip Bosinney fell in love with Irene and started to give June a cold shoulder, old Jolyon was very disappointed and angry with Philip: “there’s this Bosinney. I should like to punch the fellow’s head“ (121). There was something special about Irene which caused old Jolyon not to hate her (122). However, he thought of her as a dangerous woman: “She was not a flirt, not even a coquette – words dear to the heart of his generation, which loved to define things by a good, broad, inadequate word – but she was dangerous. He could not say why.” (161).

Nevertheless, since he got to know Irene better he admired her (Galsworthy 1946b, 10). Moreover, he said it to her which shows evidence of warm feelings towards her, because, except for his wife and “wives are funny”, he never told a woman that he liked her (21). It seems that his attitude to women started to diverge from the way of thinking of the generation he belonged to, because individual voice can be changed in accordance with various conditions (Bakhtin 2004, 674).

It is known that when old Jolyon died he left Irene fifteen thousand pounds in his will (Galsworthy 1946b, 24). It shows that in spite of trying to live as a rational and proprietary person he died as a man who appreciated emotions and beauty,

which is inconsistent with the premise that “Forsyte shall not love beauty more than reason” (29).

The second wife of young Jolyon was a foreign governess, Helène Hilmer. Young Jolyon loved her though she was jealous of her stepdaughter June and even of her own daughter Holly (Galsworthy 1946b, 69). Young Jolyon and Helène had two children: a son Jolly, who died as a soldier in the Boer war (Galsworthy 1946a, 211), and the already mentioned daughter Holly, who got married to her cousin Val Dartie (217). We can see that cross-cousin marriages were even at the beginning of the twentieth century not only socially acceptable but also quite common among the members of the middle class (Rubin 2004, 782).

Jolyon’s third wife was the ex-wife of his cousin Soames Forsyte. Her maiden name was Irene Heron. Jolyon and Irene had a son named after his father – Jolyon – but they called him Jon. It is possible that Galsworthy could have identified himself with the character of young Jolyon Forsyte. This can be deduced from the fact that John Galsworthy fell in love with the wife of his cousin (Wikipedia).

James Forsyte, a brother of old Jolyon, had a son, Soames, with his wife Emily. Soames had been married two times. His first wife was Irene Heron and the second was a Frenchwoman Annette Lamotte. Soames had a daughter Fleur with his second wife.

Soames also had a sister, Winifred, who got married to Montague Dartie. They had together two sons called Val and Benedict and daughters Imogen and Maud. Val’s whole name was Publius Valerius Dartie (Galsworthy 1946b, 51). By the end of the nineteenth century they called him Publius, because it was “chic” (51). However, when Publius Valerius was nearly ten, “chic” names went out of fashion and Winifred changed his name to Val (51). It means that popular

expressions as well as names at the end of the nineteenth century and the twentieth century were different from each other as to the fact that each generation at each social level has its own language (Bakhtin 2004, 676). Later on Imogen got married to Jack Cardigan.

Some of the siblings of old Jolyon had children. As it was already mentioned James was one of them. Besides Soames and Winifred he also had daughters: Rachel and Cicely. Roger had children whose names were: Roger, George, Francie, Eustace and Thomas. The names of Nicholas' children were: Nicholas, Ernest, Archibald, Marian, Florence and Euphemia. Susan, who got married to Mr. Hayman, had children whose names were: St. John, Augustus, Annabel, Giles and Jesse. Juley Forsyte got married to Septimus Small, but her husband was ill and they did not have children.

Thus, the second generation of the Forsyte family had twenty-one members. However, they had only nineteen descendants overall. The birth rate was decreasing and for the third generation of Forsytes it was not rare to have no children (Galsworthy 1946c, 122). For example, Val and Holly did not have children, because Holly decided so: "Being cousins they had decided or rather Holly had, to have no children" (48), which Holly might have done because she had been aware of possible health complications for children born to relatives.

As we already know, both young Jolyon and Winifred had four children. There is also mentioned Soames' only child Fleur. It is known that young Nicholas had six children: Nicholas, Blanche, Christopher, Violet, Gladys and Patrick. Roger as well as Marian, who got married to Mr. Tweetyman, had just one child (Galsworthy 1946b, 41). Finally St. John Hayman had two children (41).

A comparison of the British Society in the Victorian Age and the 20th Century

The storyline of *The Forsyte Saga* starts in the year of 1886 (Galsworthy 1946a, v). It means that the first two generations of Forsytes experienced the so called Victorian Age which was the period between the years of 1837 and 1901 (McDowall 1994, 144). It is also known that the middle class, in which the Forsyte family could be included, blossomed at that time (139).

In *The Forsyte Saga* young Jolyon Forsyte said that half of England are Forsytes (Galsworthy 1946a, 152). He also claimed that Forsytes are “the better half”, the one which is wealthy and secure (152). In contrast to the other Forsytes, young Jolyon was aware of being “Forsyte” (149) , not to say a member of the upper middle class. Most likely it means that he was the only Forsyte who did not try to hide the opinion that he found some of the manners of the upper middle class wrong. Following notions might be a way of pointing out the rapid growth of the middle class and criticising the class as well:

The core of it all is property, but there are many people who would not like it put that way. To them it is “the sanctity of the marriage tie”; but the sanctity of the marriage tie is dependent on the sanctity of property. And yet I imagine all these people are the followers of One who never owned anything. It is curious! (155).

For the middle class it was natural to insist on the family as the basis of society (Armstrong 2004, 572). In *The Forsyte Saga* we can see that in spite of the antipathy between some members of the family, Forsytes often meet together at celebrations, weddings and funerals. It is known that James Forsyte was talkative as men in conformity with society at the time ought to be and family was very important for him (Armstrong 2004, 575) (Galsworthy 1946a, 53).

To James, more than to any of the others, was “the family” significant and dear. There had always been something primitive and cosy in his attitude towards life; he loved the family heart, he loved gossip and he loved grumbling (53).

Soames Forsyte said that society is built on marriage (Galsworthy 1946c, 179). However, funerals were also very significant for the family (206).

Soames had often noticed in old days how much more neighbourly his family was to the dead than to the living. But, now, the way they had flocked to Fleur’s wedding and abstained from Timothy’s funeral, seemed to show some vital change (206).

Although Great Britain was considered a prosperous country during the Victorian Age, women were treated worse than in other industrialising European countries (McDowall 1994, 162). Women have been considered to be unequal to men (Culpin and Turner 1987, 217). When Irene got married to Soames it was still believed that a woman was a property of man – in *The Forsyte Saga* it is written that

Forsytes were concerned with property of all sorts from wives to water rights (Galsworthy 1946a, 110). A woman used to be owned by her father and since she got married she became the property of her husband (McDowall 1994, 162), which was thought to be a kind of transaction (Rubin 2004, 780).

For Soames it was incomprehensible that Irene did not want to live with him just because she did not love him: “He could not understand what she found wrong with him. It was not as if he drank! Did he run into debt, or gamble or swear; was he violent; were his friends rackety; did he stay out at night, On the contrary.” (Galsworthy 1946a, 38). He had been giving gifts to Irene in order to get love from her, but it did not work (3). He probably thought that the acceptance of a gift implies a confirmation of relationship (Rubin 2004, 778). Nevertheless, one might feel humiliated when another is giving them more than can be reciprocated (778). Irene tried to love Soames, but she was not able to (Galsworthy 1946a, 156) and she left Soames (219).

“ I have tried to do what you want; it’s not my fault that I haven’t been able to put my heart into it.” “Whose fault is it then?” He watched her askance. “Before we were married you promised to let me go if our marriage was not success. Is it success?” Soames frowned. “Success, he stammered – “it would be a success if you behaved yourself properly!” (156).

Soames’ father James also did not understand why Irene was not happy being married to his son (168). What is more, James told Irene: “ ‘We’re all fond of you, if you’d only’ -he was going to say, ‘behave yourself’, but changed it to – ‘if you’d only be more of a wife to him’ ”(169). Considering Irene’s behaviour bad was one of the

few opinions James shared with his wife Emily: “ ‘She-er-‘ said Emily, ‘behaved very badly. We don’t talk about it.’” (Galsworthy 1946b, 92). Most likely they both agreed with the idea that a lack of passivity in woman, in this case Irene, is tragic (Rubin 2004, 786).

Soames Forsyte admitted that he simply collected his second wife Annette Lamotte (Galsworthy 1946b, 244). Annette used to keep accounts in her mother’s restaurant in Soho (43). As a middle-aged man who desired to have children, Soames asked Annette’s mother for the hand of her twenty-year-old daughter whom he found beautiful (220). Annette’s mother was probably a widow, because there are no notions about Annette’s father in *The Forsyte Saga*. If Madame Lamotte was not widowed Soames would have certainly asked her father because such “transactions” were usually realized by men (Rubin 2004, 779). Soames offered Annette wealth, social position, leisure and admiration (Galsworthy 1946b, 220) and they married each other (221).

Thus, they got married in spite of not being in love with each other (236). In fact, Soames never stopped unrequitedly loving his first wife Irene (235). Soames married Annette just because he wanted to have children (221). However, when Annette was giving birth to their only child, there was a health complication (234). A doctor said to Soames that if he operated, he would save the life of Annette, but the child would die (234). If he did not operate, the child would survive, but the life of Annette would be in danger (234).

As an “owner” of Annette, it was up to Soames to decide whether to operate or not (234). Soames found it very difficult, because he wanted a child so much, but he would have felt guilty if Annette had died (235). Soames remembered Irene:

Would he have hesitated then? Not a moment! Operate, operate! Make certain of her life! No decision – a mere instinctive cry for help, in spite of his knowledge, even then, that she did not love him! But this! Ah! There was nothing overmastering in his feeling for Annette! (235).

Soames decided not to operate and hoped that Annette is strong enough to survive (236). Fortunately, both Annette and the child survived (237). When Soames got to know that Annette had given birth to a daughter and she would not be able to give birth to any more children because of health problems, he was disappointed (237). However, Soames very soon stopped regretting that a son was not born and felt that his daughter Fleur “filled the bill in his heart” (Galsworthy 1946c, 18).

After all, she bore his name, and he was not looking forward at all to the time when she would change it. Indeed, if he ever thought of such a calamity, it was seasoned by the vague feeling that he could make her rich enough to purchase perhaps and extinguish the name of the fellow who married her – why not, since, as it seemed, women were equal to men nowadays? (18 - 19).

During the night when Fleur was born, James was dying (Galsworthy 1946b, 240). Soames visited him and told James that the son of Soames and Annette was born (240). Soames certainly lied to his father because he knew that unlike the truth about the birth of the girl the news about a male descendant would make his father happy.

Until 1891 men were even allowed to beat their wives with a stick (McDowall 1994, 162). Women also knew nearly nothing about sex before they got

married (Galsworthy 1946c, 159). It was probably shocking for Irene to find out that as a possession of her husband she had to fulfil “certain duties” and she asked for a separate room (Galsworthy 1946a, 35). Soames allowed it to her, but one night “he forcibly reasserted his rights over her” (Galsworthy 1946c, 160). Later on, he regretted it though he still felt sure that it was her duty as a wife (Galsworthy 1946a, 222).

During the Victorian Age sex was not mentioned in public and men expected their wives to be faithful (Culpin and Turner 1987, 220). Nevertheless, there were more prostitutes in the cities than in the twentieth century (220), because many girls became prostitutes in order to make enough money to live on (219). In *The Forsyte Saga* it is written that Irene tried to help such women:

“Trying to help women who’ve come to grief.” Old Jolyon did not quite understand. “To grief?” he repeated; then realized with shock that she meant exactly what he would have meant himself if he had used that expression. Assisting Magdalenes of London! What a weird and terrifying interest! (Galsworthy 1946b, 7).

Not only women who felt oppressed like Irene but also men who were against the proprietary attitude to women used to be uncomprehended (Rubin 2004, 782). In *The Forsyte Saga* it is shown that young Jolyon did not like the idea that women were a property of men (Galsworthy 1946c, 101). Young Jolyon described his own attitude as feministic: “ ‘I am what they call a ‘feminist’, I believe.’ ‘Feminist!’ repeated Soames, as if seeking to gain time. ‘Does that mean that you’re against

me?’ ‘Bluntly,’ said Jolyon, ‘ I’m against any woman living with any man whom she definitely dislikes. It appears to me rotten.’ ” (Galsworthy 1946b, 177).

The death of Queen Victoria in 1901 is described in *The Forsyte Saga* as the end of a significant era:

Sixty-four years that favoured property, and had made the upper middle class; buttressed, chiselled, polished it, till it was almost indistinguishable in manners, morals, speech, appearance, habit, and soul from the nobility. An epoch which had gilded individual liberty so that if a man had money, he was free in law and fact, and if he had not money he was free in law and not in fact. An era which had canonized hypocrisy, so that to seem to be respectable was to be. (222).

At the same year when the Queen died Soames got married to Annette (221). Shortly after that young Jolyon got married to Irene (229). Thus these two marriages could be considered a symbol of new era. It was obvious that Irene became pregnant before she got married to young Jolyon, which was for Aunt Juley a bit shocking (230), because Juley belonged to the first generation of Forsytes and in the nineteenth century it was not common for women to be married having experienced the sexual side of life (Galsworthy 1946c, 159).

However, Jon and Fleur grew up in different social conditions than two previous generations of Forsytes. Especially several changes came in the role of women in society at the beginning of the twentieth century. An important fact is that women over the age of thirty achieved a right to vote in 1918 (McDowall 1994, 162).

The liberation of women took many forms (163). Their free time activities were not any longer restricted to reading, knitting and chatting as it was common for the ladies of the first generation of Forsytes (Galsworthy 1946a, 1), who were not supposed to work outside the home (Culpin and Turner 1987, 218). In the early nineteenth century, a married woman, waiting at home for her husband to return from work was thought to be the middle class ideal (217). However, from the first generation of Forsytes two out of four women stayed unmarried (Galsworthy 1946a, 241). Ann and Hester, the two old maids from the Forsyte family, might have not wanted to get married because in the nineteenth century all possessions belonged to the husband of a married woman (Culpin and Turner 1987, 218). Later on, in the years of 1870 and 1882 were issued The Married Women's Property Acts, which allowed women to keep their own incomes and property when they married (221).

Even before the end of the nineteenth century some women, for instance Francie Forsyte, were interested in such activities as composing music (127). Francie was thought to be along with young Jolyon the most free-spirited Forsyte of the second generation (Galsworthy 1946c, 103).

At that time it was considered as a very liberal attitude towards women that Swithin Forsyte did not see why women should not paint pictures, write tunes or even books (Galsworthy 1946a, 127). Later on – in the twentieth century – both young men and women were often interested in writing poetry (Galsworthy 1946c, 57). It is known that Holly, who used to write a poetry before she got married, thought that Jon might be a good poet, but he did not think he is talented enough:

“Gull's flight and sheep bells’! You're a poet, my dear!” Jon sighted “Oh, Golly! No go!” “Try! I used to at your age.” “Did you? Mother say ‘try’ too;

but I'm so rotten. Have you any of yours for me to see?" "My dear," Holly murmured. "I've been married nineteen years. I only wrote verses when I wanted to be." (57).

Jon appears to be modest, which would have been considered unnatural in the end of the nineteenth century, because adequate narcissism was necessary for men (Rubin 2004, 786).

In the twenties of the twentieth century the liberation of women was expressed also by their appearance. They wore shorter hair as well as shorter skirts (McDowall 1994, 163), which suited independent girls who wanted to enjoy themselves (Culpin and Turner 1987, 223-224). Soames Forsyte obviously found these young women offending: "Dreadful young creatures – squealing and squawking and showing their legs!" (Galsworthy 1946c, 34).

It was not rare to see women drinking and smoking in public as well (McDowall 1994, 163). It is known that Fleur smoked cigarettes along with men: "Jon handed the cigarettes. He lighted his father's and Fleur's, then one for himself" (Galsworthy 1946c, 112).

The result of the liberation of relationships at the beginning of the twentieth century is not only the elimination of the oppression of women but also fewer differences between the behaviour of men and women in general (Rubin 2004, 787). For instance, Fleur seems to be a dominant character (Galsworthy 1946c, 62). Before her relationship with Jon was spoiled she always felt like that if she really wanted a thing she got it (62). She was also thought to be "as restless as any of these modern young women" (54).

Fleur even wanted to persuade Jon to get married to her secretly in Scotland, because at that time there was no age limit for marriage in Scotland, unlike England where people ought to be at least twenty-one years old in order to get married (135). However, Jon did not want to do so, because it would hurt his mother (137). Fleur was not passive at all, which would be unacceptable for women of previous generations (Rubin 2004, 786).

By contrast, Jon was “sensitive as a girl”, even “more sensitive than nine out of ten girls of that day” (Galsworthy 1946c, 75). Furthermore, he was silent (74), which would be considered unnatural for men earlier (Armstrong 2004, 575). When Jon got to know the details about the relationship between his mother and Fleur’s father, he was horrified that there could be men who looked on women as their property (Galsworthy 1946c, 168). It was really difficult for him to deal with it and talk about it with Fleur (182). Fleur said: “ ’That old story – was it so very dreadful?’, Jon answered: ‘Yes.’ Fleur replied: ‘I didn’t think in these days boys were tied to their mother’s apron-strings’ ” (182).

Finally Jon decided to give up his relationship with Fleur, because his father wished so before he died (191). Jon did not tell it Fleur in person, but he asked Soames, who visited Irene and Jon because Fleur forced him to do so (188), to let Fleur know (191). Jon appears to be rather old-fashioned as he told the father of his girlfriend that he wanted to end the relationship because it was up to men to “give and take” women earlier (Rubin 2004, 779). So Soames told the information to Fleur:

“My dear,” said Soames, “I-I did my best, but –“ ...Fleur ran to him and put a hand on each of his shoulders. “She?²” “No” muttered Soames; “he. I was to

² meant Irene

tell you that it was no use; he must do what his father wished before he died.” He caught her by the waist. “Come, child, don’t let them hurt you. They’re not worth your little finger.” Fleur tore herself from his grasp. “You didn’t – you couldn’t have tried. You – you betrayed me, Father!” (Galsworthy 1946c, 192).

Some of the Forsytes, including women – for instance Winifred, found the behaviour of young girls in the twentieth century shocking: “the girls in the streets – the girls who’ve been in munitions, the little flappers in the shops; their manners now really quite hit you in the eye.” (150). It is known that Soames did not think of Fleur as of a “flapper”: “Fleur was not a flapper, not one of those slangy, ill-bred young females. And yet she was frighteningly self-willed, and full of life, and determined to enjoy it.” (34). Winifred’s daughter Imogen was offended by the morals of some young women as well (150). The Belgian Prosper Profond, who was the lover of Annette, had a different opinion. He said that the only difference in behaviour between women in the nineteenth century and women in the twentieth century is that “what was inside before is now outside” (150). He added that all people want pleasure and always did (150). Prosper also said that women had more opportunities in the twentieth century than in the nineteenth century (150), which means that they might realize more things they desire for than before.

It seems that the conception of the ideal man was changing from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. For Aunt Juley Soames was a match for anybody because she found him clever, good-looking, wealthy, considerate and careful (Galsworthy 1946b, 233). Soames did not drink much alcohol, go into debt or gamble and he was not violent (Galsworthy 1946a, 38).

However, there were situations when Soames behaved contrary to Aunt Juley's notion of him. For example, Soames decided to save rather the child which was going to be born than his wife (Galsworthy 1946b, 236), which is definitely not an example of considerate behaviour. What is more, once he was violent towards Irene (Galsworthy 1946c, 160). That might be some of the reasons why Imogen Dartie found "good men" such as Soames dull and did not understand why Annette, who was only two years older than her, got married to Soames (Galsworthy 1946b, 233).

In the twentieth century, the divorce rate was increasing (McDowall 1994, 163). There were divorces before but it was thought to be scandalous (Galsworthy 1946a, 216). In addition, "scandal" was at the time a catch-word (102) just as well as the above-mentioned word "chic" (Galsworthy 1946b, 51). The upper middle class and each generation of it had its specifics in language and the way of thinking (Bakhtin 2004, 675). The usage of different expressions sometimes led to the misunderstanding among the members of particular generations. For instance, when Fleur used the word "romantic", Soames did not know what she meant by that (Galsworthy 1946c, 30). "The word was to him extravagant and dangerous – it was as if she had said: 'How jolly.'" (30).

The first two divorces among Forsytes were those between Soames and Irene and between Winifred and Montague (Galsworthy 1946b, 55). Despite the fact that James Forsyte found divorce a "scandal" which Forsytes never before had in the family (67), eventually he wanted Soames to get divorced with Irene:

"I'm getting on, Soames. At my age I can't tell. I might die at any time.

There'll be a lot of money. There's Rachel and Cicely got no children, and

Val's out there - that chap his father will get hold of all he can. And somebody'll pick up Imogen, I shouldn't wonder.""It's you, my boy," he said suddenly: "you ought to get a divorce." (213).

This opinion was definitely caused by the fact that it was considered almost sure that Irene would not give birth to Soames' child (213). Since James found Soames his only reasonable male descendant, he wished Soames had a son who would be a continuator of the genuine Forsyte family (213).

Soames was worried about the divorce:

It would injure him in his profession. He would have to get rid of the house at Robin Hill, on which he had spent so much money, so much anticipation – and at a sacrifice. And she! She would no longer belong to him, not even in name! She would pass out of his life and he – he would never see her again! (Galsworthy 1946a, 216).

It is known that Soames had employed the investigator Polteed to watch Irene and prove that she had a lover, whom she in fact at the time did not have (Galsworthy 1946b, 136).

Winifred wanted to get divorced from Montague, because he used to drink alcohol a lot (53) and spend a lot of money on gambling (46). What is more, he had given some of Winifred's jewellery to some dancer (44) with whom he had gone to Buenos Aires (88). Winifred used to keep Montague just because he was the father of her children (46). Since 1857 women were allowed to divorce their husbands who

were unfaithful and had left them or those who were cruel to women whilst men had to prove their wives' adultery (Keene 1995, 16).

Winifred was in a way opposite to Irene. Irene left Soames in spite of the fact that he was at that time considered to be a good husband (233). By contrast, Winifred tried to keep the married life as long as possible though Montague was "the limit" (48).

Even Montague's son Val felt ashamed for his father when he met him with his friend Crum at the Goat's Club:

It was his father! He could have sunk into the crimson carpet. It was not the meeting in this place, not even that his father was "screwed"; it was Crum's word "bounder", which, as by heavenly revelation perceived at that moment to be true. Yes, his father looked a bounder with his dark good looks, and his pink carnation, and his square, self-assertive walk. And without a word he ducked behind the young woman and slipped out of the promenade. He heard the word, "Val" behind him, and ran down deep-carpeted steps past the chuckers-out into the Square. To be ashamed of his own father is perhaps the bitterest experience a young man can go through. (53).

Val Dartie was aware of the fact that divorces were public, which he found disgusting: "Can't it be done quietly somehow? It's so disgusting for – for mother, and – and everybody." (87). Nevertheless, he could not stand the way his father behaved towards his mother and supported Winifred at the Court (150).

It is said that in Val "the Dartie and the Forsyte were struggling" (88). "For debts, drink, dancers, he had a certain sympathy; but the pearls – no! That was too

much!” (88). It is also known that Val found some of the older Forsytes awful because they were fearfully careful (76). James was worried that Val might “get into bad ways” as well as Montague (90). Unlike Aunt Juley, Winifred did not share James’ opinion: “ ‘Val loves horses,’ said Winifred...Aunt Juley thought that horses were very uncertain, had not Montague found them so? ‘Val’s different,’ said Winifred; ‘he takes after me.’ ” (230).

Val certainly took after Montague somehow, but unlike Montague he was respecting his wife (Galsworthy 1946c, 48).

Holly said to Val: “Don’t overtire your leg³ and don’t bet too much.” With the pressure of her chest against his own, and her eyes looking into his, Val felt both leg and pocket safe. He should be moderate; Holly was always right – she had a natural aptitude. It did not seem so remarkable to him perhaps, as it might to others, that – half Dartie as he was – he should have been perfectly faithful to his young first cousin during the twenty years since he married her. (48).

In *The Forsyte Saga* it is written that young people in the twenties of the twentieth century had a “To-morrow we die” feeling and therefore they wanted to enjoy their life as much as possible (108). It might be a consequence of the First World War that people did not just go to work and save the money like the generation of Soames did (139).

Soames found the third generation of the Forsyte family less self-conscious than his generation and it seemed to him that the young ones laughed at everything

³ Val’s leg was injured in the Boer War (Galsworthy 1946b, 229).

(174). As for the changes between generations, Michael Mont, who eventually got married to Fleur (197), said that human nature does not change, but the forms of thought change with times (179), which might also refer to the changing conception of the role of men and women (Rubin 2004, 787). Also Prosper Profound thought that human nature is always the same (Galsworthy 1946c, 150). However, Annette Forsyte found human nature not the same in England as anywhere else (150). It seems that the context, in this case probably the geographical context and the context of age, influenced the attitudes of the characters (Bakhtin 2004, 677).

When we talk about the nature of Forsytes, the feature that did not change is the feud among the branches of the family (Galsworthy 1946b, 168). Old Jolyon did not like James and his son Soames: “A man of property! H’mph! Like his father, he was always nosing out of bargains, a cold blooded young beggar!” (Galsworthy 1946a, 16). Old Jolyon also found it embarrassing that unlike young Jolyon Soames is a wealthy and successful lawyer: “Then, too, in old Jolyon’s mind there was a secret ache that the son of James – of James, whom he always thought such a poor thing, should be pursuing the paths of success, while his own son -!” (116). Young Jolyon disliked Soames because he found Soames’ attitude to Irene too proprietary (Galsworthy 1946b, 81).

As for the third generation, Jolly hated Val, who seemed to him too showy (119). Their conflict led to the fact that they both went to the Boer war (160).

Normal adolescence, even in England of a conservative tendency, though not taking things too seriously, was vehement for a fight to a finish and a good licking for the Boers. Of this larger faction Val Dartie was naturally a member. Radical youth, on the other hand, a small but perhaps more vocal

body, was for stopping the war and giving the Boers autonomy. Until Black Week, however the groups were amorphous, without sharp edges, and argument remained but academic. Jolly was one of those who knew not where he stood. A streak of his grandfather old Jolyon's love of justice prevented him from seeing one side only. Moreover, in his set of "the best" there was a "jumping-jesus" of extremely advanced opinions and some personal magnetism. Jolly wavered. His father too, seemed doubtful in his views. (140).

However, Jolly decided to go to the Boer war, because Val said about Jolly that he was pro-Boer (141). What is more, Jolly dared Val to do the same (160). So they both went to the war and Jolly died there (211). Young Jolyon felt very miserable when his son Jolly died: "His boy! From a little chap always so good to him – so friendly! Twenty years old, and cut down like grass – to have no life at all! 'I didn't really know him' he thought, 'and he didn't know me; but we loved each other. It's only love that matters.' " (211).

It is written in *The Forsyte Saga* that June went to the war as a Red Cross nurse (196).

The resolution to become a Red Cross nurse, taken under stimulus of Jolly's enlistment, had been loyally fulfilled with the irritation and regret which all Forsytes feel at what curtails their individual liberties. Enthusiastic at first about the "wonderfulness" of the work, she had begun after a month to feel that she could train herself so much better than others could train her. (196).

It is also noted in *The Forsyte Saga* that June was against the Boer War: “ ‘Well! Why can’t we leave them alone?’ (105)...’They only want their independence,’ said June;’ and why shouldn’t they have it?’ ‘Because,’ answered Soames, ‘they happen to have agreed to our suzerainty.’...’a contract is a contract.’ ” (106). As we can see, Soames found war against the Boers as a reasonable decision. It is also known that young Jolyon was comparing Soames’ attitude to the Boers with his attitude to women: “Domination of peoples or of women! Attempts to master and possess those who did not want you!” (177). Holly became a Red Cross nurse, because she felt responsible for the fact that her brother Jolly and her fiancé Val went to the war (197).

Val and Holly did not like Fleur because they thought she had got a rather “having” nature (Galsworthy 1946c, 147). Nevertheless, Fleur was not materialistic: “ ‘He⁴ piles up his money for me’, she thought, ‘but what’s the use, if I’m not going to be happy?’ ‘Money, and all it bought, did not bring happiness. Love only brought that.’ ” (142). However, Fleur got married to Michael Mont though she did not love him (197). Soames found the wedding unnatural: “He had never seen her look prettier, yet he could not rid himself of the impression that this business was unnatural – remembering still that crushed figure burrowing into the corner of the sofa.” (201). It seems that Soames was not as proprietary as he was thought to be since he was not happy that his daughter got married to a wealthy man, whom she did not love. Nevertheless, his opinion might be caused by the fact, that he thought of Fleur as a son since men and women seemed to be equal in the twentieth century (18).

⁴ meant Soames

Concerning the antipathy among Forsytes, Irene said that she was wrong when she told old Jolyon that love was forever (Galsworthy 1946b, 109). Since Irene had the certain experience with the Forsyte family, she thought that only aversion lasts (109).

Nevertheless, there is an example of the end of a feud in *The Forsyte Saga*. June used to be angry with Irene when Bosinney fell in love with Irene (Galsworthy 1946a, 225), but later on she forgave her (Galsworthy 1946b, 132). It was probably because they used to be friends before they argued (Galsworthy 1946a, 6). However, aversion towards Soames Irene could not help because it was a “natural product of the nerves which we do not change” (Galsworthy 1946b, 109).

There happened a lot of changes in British society from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. As we can see upper middle class experienced a growth. In the twentieth century the role of men and women changed as well. During the Victorian Age women were considered subordinate to men. However, in the twentieth century they seemed to be equal to men in many aspects. There were fewer differences in the behaviour of men and women as well. In *The Forsyte Saga* are all the changes and issues connected with it depicted.

Conclusion

There happened a lot of significant changes in society during the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. At first there was a rapid growth of the middle class. John Galsworthy recorded that situation in young Jolyon's words about the Forsytes : "They are half England and the better half too, the safe half, the three per cent half, the half that counts. It's their wealth that makes everything possible..." (Galsworthy 1946a, 152).

Members of the middle class found family the basis of society (Armstrong 2004, 572). In *The Forsyte Saga* we can see that the Forsyte family meets together on many occasions though there are some feuds among the branches of the family.

In *The Forsyte Saga* are depicted the upper middle class' values and its important changes from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. The changes are obvious especially in the following areas: marriages and divorces, relationships between men and women, the roles and rights of men and women in a family and expected behaviour of men and women.

There are described marriages which were considered to be a kind of transaction (Rubin 2004, 780) since both wives and daughters had been considered to be a property of men (McDowall 1994, 162). Soames, who wanted to have children asked the mother of the twenty-year-old Annette Lamotte for the hand of her daughter (Galsworthy 1946b, 220). Considering that Soames offered Annette wealth, social position, leisure and admiration (220), the "transaction" was realized and they married each other (221). Moreover, earlier when women married, all possessions belonged to her husband (Culpin and Turner 1987, 218). Nevertheless, The Married

Women's Property Acts issued in 1870 and 1882 allowed women to keep their own incomes and property when they married (221).

Young Jolyon did not like the idea that women are a property of men (Galsworthy 1946c, 101) and described his own attitude as feminist (Galsworthy 1946b, 177). Jon Forsyte as well as his father found the proprietary attitude to women awful when he got to know the details about the relationship between Irene and Soames (Galsworthy 1946c, 168). Nevertheless, at the end of the nineteenth century Soames Forsyte was thought to be a good husband (Galsworthy 1946b, 233).

In spite of progress in many aspects, cross-cousin marriages were still considered normal among the members of the upper middle class at the beginning of the twentieth century (Rubin 2004, 782). As it is mentioned Holly Forsyte got married to her cousin Val Dartie (Galsworthy 1946a, 217). However, Holly decided to have no children because they were cousins (Galsworthy 1946c, 48). It seems that she already might have been aware of possible health complications for children born to relatives. Jon Forsyte and Fleur Forsyte, who were also cousins, planned to get married to each other (135), but never did in the end.

It is also known that the divorce rate was increasing (McDowall 1994, 163). Since 1857 women were allowed to divorce their husbands, but they had to prove that their husbands were unfaithful and had left them or were cruel to them whilst men only had to prove adultery (Keene 1995, 16). The first two divorces among Forsytes were those between Soames and Irene and between Winifred and Montague (Galsworthy 1946b, 55), which were happening at the end of the nineteenth century when it was still considered to be scandalous (Galsworthy 1946a, 216).

As for the relationships between men and women, at the end of the nineteenth century women were usually married ignorant of the sexual side of life (Galsworthy

1946c, 159). Before the marriage with Soames Irene probably did not know enough about sex and when she got to know about her “duties as a wife”, she asked Soames to have a separate bedroom (Galsworthy 1946a, 35). However, once Soames “forcibly reasserted his rights over her” (Galsworthy 1946c, 160). Nevertheless, in the twentieth century women could get married being pregnant. It is known that Irene became pregnant before she married young Jolyon (Galsworthy 1946b, 230).

In the nineteenth century it was up to men to “give and take” women (Rubin 2004, 779). Thus, Jon Forsyte seems to be quite old-fashioned, because he did not tell Fleur in person that he wanted to end the relationship with her, but he told Soames so (Galsworthy 1946c, 191).

In terms of the role and rights of men and women in a family there came important changes from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century. Women in Great Britain were treated the worst from industrialising European countries before the end of the nineteenth century (McDowall 1994, 162). It is known that women in their free time used to do just activities such as reading, knitting and chatting at the time (Galsworthy 1946a, 1).

However, in the twentieth century women seemed to be equal to men in many aspects. The liberation was among others expressed by the appearance of women. They wore shorter skirts (McDowall 1994, 163), which Soames found offending (Galsworthy 1946c, 36). Winifred and her daughter Imogen also found the behaviour of young girls in the twentieth century shocking (150). Some young women, for instance Fleur (112), were smoking openly (McDowall 1994, 163). In spite of the liberation in many aspects, in *The Forsyte Saga* it is shown that even in the early twentieth century it was up to Soames to decide whether or not operate Annette since there was the health complication during the birth-giving (Galsworthy 1946b, 234).

The expected behaviour of men and women from the Victorian Age to the beginning of the twentieth century changed in the following way. A married woman, who was waiting at home for her husband to return from work was thought to be the middle class ideal in the nineteenth century (Culpin and Turner 1987, 217). Francie Forsyte, who enjoyed composing music (Galsworthy 1946a, 127), was along with young Jolyon thought to be the most free-spirited Forsyte of the second generation (Galsworthy 1946c, 103). It was thought to be a liberal attitude towards women that Swithin Forsyte did not see why women should not paint pictures, write tunes or even books (Galsworthy 1946a, 127).

However, in the twentieth century there were fewer differences between the behaviour of men and women (Rubin 2004, 787). Both young men and women were often interested in writing poetry (Galsworthy 1946c, 57). In *The Forsyte Saga* it is shown that Fleur was a dominant character (Galsworthy 1946c, 62) while Jon was “sensitive as a girl” (75), which would be in the nineteenth century considered unacceptable (Armstrong 2004, 575) (Rubin 2004, 786).

As we can see *The Forsyte Saga* points out these important aspects of the process of the liberation of relationships from the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century in Great Britain. This is why the changes in relationships and gender situation in particular generations of the upper middle class’ family from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century were analysed based on this novel-cycle.

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Appendices

1. The photograph of John Galsworthy
2. The model of the expected roles of a husband and a wife
3. Forsyte family tree

Appendix 1

The photograph of John Galsworthy:



Source: www.nndb.com [online]. [cit. 21. 7. 2011]. Available on www:

<http://www.nndb.com/people/225/000087961/>

Appendix 2

The model of the expected roles of a husband and a wife:

HUSBAND

Get goods

Travel, seek a living

Get money and provisions

Deal with many men

Be "entertaining"

Be skillful in talk

Be a giver

Apparel yourself as you may

Dispatch all things outdoors

WIFE

Gather them together and save them

Keep the house

Do not vainly spend it

Talk with few

Be solitary and withdrawn

Boast of silence

Be a saver

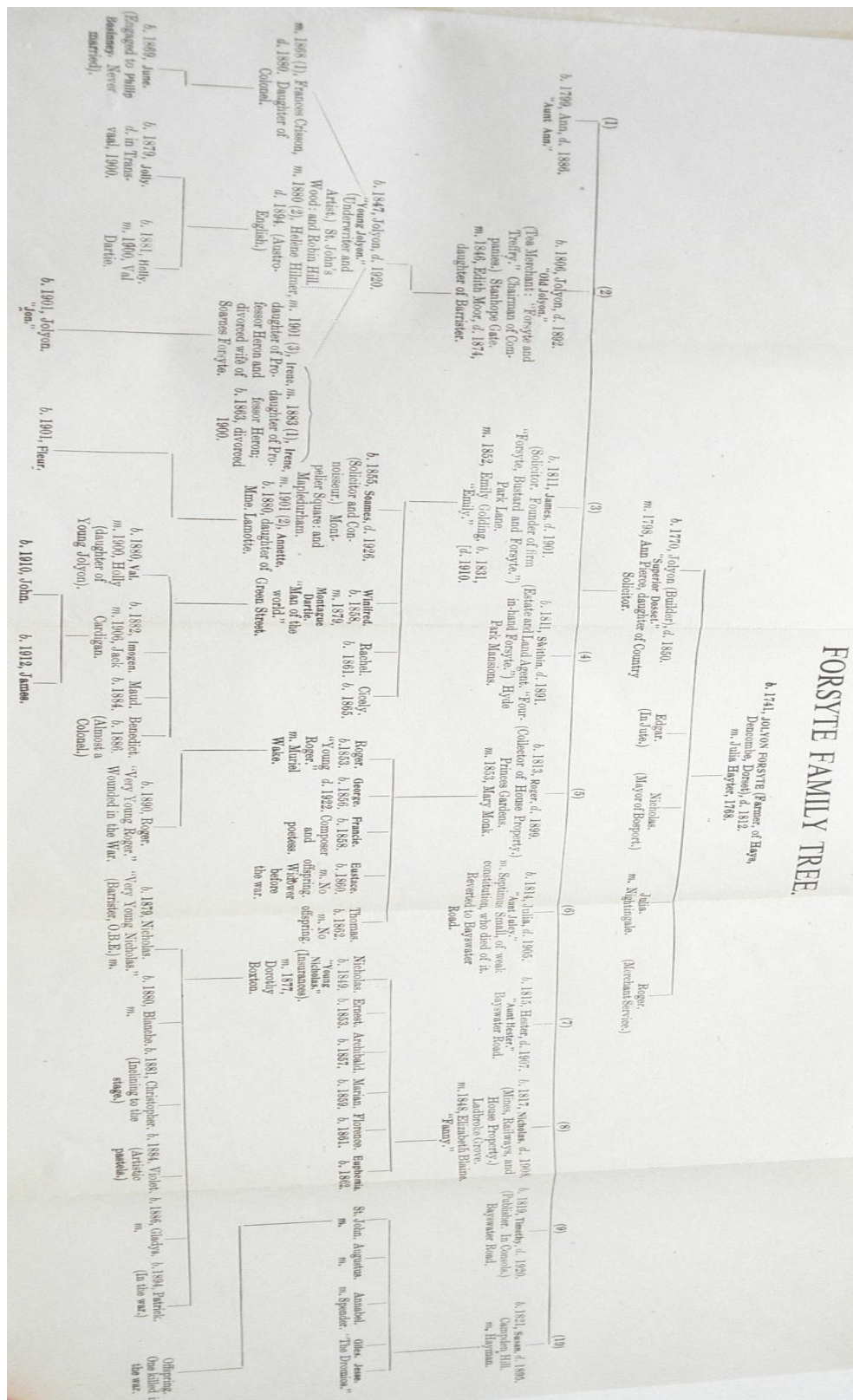
Apparel yourself as it becomes you

Oversee and give order within

Source: Armstrong 2004, 575

Appendix 3

Forsyte family tree:



Source: Galsworthy 1946a, 241